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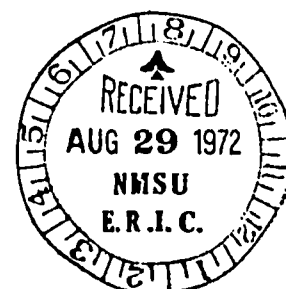
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ABSTRACT

The major objective of this research is to isolate factors associated with the socialization of members of a voluntary organization. The hypothesis underlying this study is that much of the variance in the dissensus between organizational leaders and rank and file members related to participant obligation can be explained by the measures of perceived benefits, value orientation, and perceived alternative organizations from which these benefits can be received. The sample consisted of 2 subsamples of 50 persons each which were randomly drawn from the organizational members classified by the organization's leaders as "active" and "less active." The results of this study suggest that perceived benefits, both current and anticipated, and the value the respondent attached to the particular type of benefit are related to adult socialization. It was further concluded that the noneconomic benefits were more highly associated with role performance than the economic benefits, and anticipated benefits were generally more highly associated with role learning than were benefits currently received. The study, in focussing on role learning, examined the successful transmission of what the role of member involves; it is recommended that the next step in understanding participation is that of examining the consistency between what the member thinks he should do as a member and his actual behavior. (HBC)

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SOCIALIZATION INTO THE ROLE OF MEMBER
OF A LOW INCOME COOPERATIVE

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*This paper analyzes data from a study of a low income cooperative on which Carol Zippert served as co-project leader. We also wish to thank Michael F. Nolan for assistance.

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Socialization Into the Role of Member of a Low Income Cooperative

Much of the research concerned with voluntary associations has focused on membership participation, the assumption being that an organization must have the active participation of its members if it is to achieve the goals for which it has been established. This concern with participation and factors related to the participation, has stressed what Beal (1956) calls "static" factors. (For example see: Hausknecht, 1962; Wright and Hyman, 1958; Tannenbaum and Kahn, 1958; Spiniad, 1960.) One set of factors which are of a "dynamic" nature but which have received very little attention are those related to the organizational socialization process. Etzioni (1965) suggests that behavior of members in normative organizations can be modified through the socialization process. Consequently, an analysis of how an individual acquires "the requisite orientation for satisfactorily functioning in a role" (Parsons, 1951) remains a fruitful area for organizational research.

Before a person can fulfill a role such as that of "member," he must know what behavior is expected. In many work organizations one might look at the job description to determine within limits what is expected of a particular member in the organization. In most voluntary organizations only the role of certain officers are spelled out with little description concerning what is expected of the rank and file member other than the bare minimum requirement for membership such as the regular payment of dues. For some organizations only a minimum of participation is necessary. Both Barber (1950) and Warner (1965) have suggested that despite all the interest in participation, some

organizations may not require a great deal of participation from their members. Nevertheless, leaders of most voluntary organizations feel that if the organization is to achieve the goal for which it has been established membership involvement in addition to the regular payment of dues is necessary.

In discussing socialization in normative organizations, Etzioni (1965) noted that although normative organizations differ in the socialization process, socialization plays a central role in all of them and is carried out largely through formal mechanisms by organizational office holders. Since the socialization process is largely the responsibility of the office holders or the organizational leadership, we can assume that the socialization process is oriented to providing the rank and file membership with an orientation similar to that of the organizational leaders. The socialization process can be viewed as a process designed to reduce the dissensus between the rank and file members and the organizational leadership. Said another way, the new rank and file members become involved in an acculturation process. In his discussion of consensus, Etzioni suggests six consensus spheres in which groups of actors from the organization may agree or disagree. The six consensus spheres include consensus on: general values, organizational goals, organizational means, participation in the organization, performance obligations and cognitive perspectives. While no assumption is made that high consensus in all spheres is required for an organization to operate effectively, a minimum of consensus in the sphere of performance obligation by at least a portion of the membership is related to organization effectiveness and survival. At least such is perceived by the leaders who make an effort to "socialize" members to reduce the dissensus in this sphere.

Etzioni also noted the relationship between socialization and recruitment. The results of a study by Mulford (1968) support Etzioni's proposition which suggests that where much emphasis has been placed on selective recruitment by the organization less emphasis needs to be placed on socialization since the recruitment process can select for consensus in the various spheres. On the other hand, for organizations designed to maximize membership in a given area which implies little selectivity much more attention must be focused on socialization.²

The major objective of this research is to isolate factors associated with the socialization of members of a voluntary organization.

Much of one's socialization is carried out during childhood, but the learning of specific skills and role orientation is never completed (Brimm and Wheeler, 1966). Adult socialization is especially evident whenever one assumes a new status such as becoming a member of a new voluntary association. Some individuals may come to learn in general the role of membership in voluntary organizations during childhood, but the learning of specific roles cannot be generalized from one voluntary organization to another. While this paper focuses on a socialization process which is more directed toward the teaching of means than ends, some of the teaching emphasis of the organization is designed to reduce the dissensus between the organizational leadership and the rank and file members in the consensus spheres of organizational goals, organizational means, values, and cognitive perspectives.

In attempting to explain why an individual might be interested in learning a new role, Brim and Wheeler (1966) suggest that individuals orient their action

in given ways because of sanction control. In the present context this would mean that the member's perception that he will get something he wants motivates him to learn the role of member. The exchange theory perspective has been utilized in attempting to explain participation in voluntary organizations (Rogers, et. al., 1972; Smith, 1966; Beal, 1956). But such a framework has received little empirical attention by those interested in determining factors related to the individual's role learning during adulthood.

The present study, as did the study by Rogers et. al., (1972) draws heavily from the Barnard-Simon "theory of organizational equilibrium" (March and Simon, 1958) in which the individual is seen as receiving certain benefits from the organization in return for certain costs. The Barnard-Simon Theory is composed of four major elements. The theory suggests that individuals will (1) incur certain costs, (in the present study this would mean the individual would learn the member role) (2) if the benefit perceived by the member was large enough, (3) if there were no alternative organization from which the individual could receive this benefit at less cost and (4) if the individual values this benefit.

We predict that the individual's perception of the benefits he will receive, the alternatives he perceives as being available for receiving the benefits and his own value orientation will be highly related to his learning of the role of member. The hypothesis underlying this study is that much of the variance in the dissensus between organizational leaders and rank and file members related to participant obligation can be explained by the measures of perceived benefits, value orientation, and perceived alternative organizations from which these benefits can be received.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 100 persons was used in the analysis. The sample consisted of two subsamples of 50 persons each which were randomly drawn from the organizational members classified by the organization's leaders as "active" and "less active." This scope sampling design (see Willer, 1967) was utilized to produce variance in a role performance and predictably in the dependent variable of role learning.

When asked what an active member of this organization should do, the organizational leaders named seventeen performance items. This list of seventeen items was then presented to the respondents with the question: "Which of the following do you feel a member should do in order to be active in the co-op?" Because the organizational leaders listed each of these participant obligation items, the larger the number (the higher the score) of items the respondent indicated the member should do to be active, the greater the consensus between organizational leaders and rank and file members. This scale, which is a measure of the consensus between leaders and members, is referred to as the unweighted socialization scale since it suggests that the members learned the role.

Since not all of the items composing the socialization scale were viewed as equally important to the functioning of the organization, the leaders were also asked to rank each of the items as to its importance. The organizational leaders utilized a three-point index to evaluate the importance of each item to the effective operation of the organization. The most important items were weighted 3, the next important 2, and the least important 1. The sum of

the weights of the items endorsed were used as our weighted socialization scale, a second measure of role learning.

A measure of perceived benefits was obtained by asking the organizational leaders to formulate a list of benefits the members of the organization receive or might receive as a result of their membership in the organization. The list of nineteen benefits listed by the leaders were primarily of an instrumental nature and did not include benefits such as a sense of belonging or a feeling of social acceptance shown to be important benefits when related to role performance (Rogers et. al., 1972). The respondents were then asked which of these benefits they were currently receiving from the organization. A factor analysis of these items revealed that with the exception of one item these benefits could be grouped into the three categories of: political benefits, general economic benefits, and cooperative economic benefits. The respondent's benefit score for each of the three dimensions was the sum of the weights (based on factor analysis) of each of the benefits he received.

Since perceived benefits could be both those the members currently receives and those he anticipates he will receive, the respondents were also asked "What benefits do you think you will receive in the future as a result of your membership in this organization?" When presented with this same list of nineteen benefits, a factor analysis revealed the same three factors as those obtained when using current benefits received.³

Our measure of perceived availability of the benefit from an alternative organization was consistent with the perceived benefit measure. For each benefit which the individual indicated he currently received from the organization

he was asked whether he could receive the benefit from some other organization. The items were then grouped into the three major categories of political, general economic, and cooperative economic benefits corresponding to the three categories resulting from the current benefit analysis. For each benefit item which the respondent indicated he could ~~receive~~ from some other organization a value of 1 was assigned. If the benefit could not be received from another organization or if the respondent did not ~~receive the benefit~~ a zero was assigned. The sum of the assigned values for each of the three types of benefits represents the respondent's score on the alternative organization benefit. The higher the score the greater the possibility of receiving more of the benefits from some other organization.

Finally two measures of the values attached to the benefits were obtained. To determine the importance the respondent placed on the political benefits he was asked the extent of his agreement to the liberal type statement, "Poor people should not gather at meetings if it will cause trouble in the community." Responses to this item were coded so that a strongly agree would get the lowest score (1), reflecting the low value the respondent placed on political actions. The assumption is that the higher the score the greater the value the respondent places on political benefits. Unfortunately, no value items were available to differentiate between receiving general economic benefits and cooperative economic benefits since the cooperative economic benefits which are available to the individual are basically economic benefits which accrue to the individual by virtue of the special features of a cooperative. To determine the value the respondent attached to the economic benefit he was asked

his agreement with the statement: "Even if a person has a place to live, food to eat, and clothes to wear, he should strive to improve his income and level of living." The assumption being that a greater agreement to this statement indicated a greater value placed on economic benefits.

The exchange model employed in this study does not allow for the inclusion of demographic variables. Nevertheless, we did consider the following variables in our analysis: income, years of membership tenure, age, and years of formal schooling. These variables were selected because they might reasonably affect the role learning. Income directly affects ability to participate, although as income rises, one's ability to profit from a poor people's co-op may decrease. Membership tenure was included since it would be an indication of the length of exposure to the role teaching by organizational leaders and fellow members. We included age and years of formal education as possible measures of one's ability to learn the role. However, Brim and Wheeler (1966) note that most adult roles are aimed at the "average man." On this basis we would assume or predict that the role of member is within the intelligence capacity of practically any normal adult. Thus we assume these variables would not be important in facilitating or inhibiting role learning.

The organization from which we obtained the data for this study was a local consumer cooperative which was affiliated with the Southern Consumer Cooperative. The membership of this organization at the time of the study numbered about a thousand most of whom were low income black families living in a southern community. For studying factors related to adult socialization, this organization has two advantages. First the organization is a newly

formed organization suggesting that all members had learned the membership role relatively recently. The members had to learn the role of a member as an adult since organizations of this type did not exist in the area where the majority of the members were reared. This allowed us to assume that long standing traditions would not be a factor in differentially influencing some persons to learn the role.

Secondly, previous studies (Wright and Hyman, 1958; Hausknecht, 1962) have shown that rurality, race and income are related to participation in voluntary organizations. In a relative sense, rural southern blacks have lacked contact with formal organizations. (For example see Knupfer, 1947; Lewis, 1966). As an example, the small rural churches of which many poor blacks are members are characterized by informal structures when compared to larger urban churches. Not only do rural blacks lack role models for the member role of this voluntary organization, but it is also relatively safe to assume that they have had limited exposure to the role of member in any formal organization.

In short, our sample represents a group which has here-to-fore had little contact with formal organizations and consequently we have some basis for assuming that any relationships we observe are due to the variables considered and not to some systematic bias present in the sample.

Although most of the rank and file members (as they entered the organization) lacked a knowledge of formal organizations and the appropriate role of members in such organizations, such was not true of the organizational leaders. The leaders of the organization, who were largely responsible for

its founding, had had much exposure to formal organizations and also had a definite perception of what the member's role in the organization ought to be.

While we assume that a certain selectivity in recruitment occurred because a minimum consensus on organizational goals, organizational means, and values must exist between the leadership and potential members before they would join the organization, recruitment was not designed by the leaders to be of a restrictive nature.⁵ The leaders were eager to have a maximum number of low income persons join the organization so that it could attain economic and political power. Thus, since the organization did not selectively recruit, socialization was necessarily an important concern of the organization.

FINDINGS

We utilized a multiple regression analysis to determine the variance in the socialization measure explained by the fifteen independent variables. The fifteen variables accounted for about two-thirds of the variance in the dependent variable whether the weighted or unweighted socialization scale was used.⁴ When employing the unweighted socialization scale, fifteen independent variables revealed a multiple correlation of .85. The eleven measures drawn from the exchange model resulted in a multiple correlation of .84 suggesting that the four demographic variables, which in some cases were highly correlated with the dependent variable, added little to the variance already explained.

When the weighted socialization scale was employed in the regression analysis with the same fifteen independent variables, a multiple correlation

of .82 was obtained. In this case the eleven independent variables drawn from the Bernard-Simon theory revealed a multiple correlation of .79. These findings suggest that somewhat less variance in the weighted scale as compared to the unweighted socialization scale was explained, and that of the variance explained the eleven independent variables drawn from the exchange model explained a larger proportion of the variance in the unweighted than in the weighted socialization scale.

Although the major focus of this paper was to determine the correlation between a set of variables drawn from the exchange model and socialization, the contribution of specific variables was also deemed important in suggesting measures organizational leaders might use to increase socialization. In terms of relative importance, the set of variables concerned with political benefits has the largest standardized partial regression (beta) coefficients. There were no variables which had a larger beta coefficient when the unweighted socialization scale was used. When using the weighted version of the dependent variable, only one variable (income) has a larger beta coefficient than any of the three. The three political variables, current political benefits, anticipated political benefits, and political value index accounted for 67 percent of the variance in the unweighted socialization scale and 57 percent of the variance in the weighted socialization scale.

The explanatory power of the three political variables ($R^2=.57$) was more clearly seen by comparing it to the explanatory value of all fifteen variables. In the case of the weighted socialization scale only ten percent additional variance is accounted for by adding the remaining twelve variables

and an even smaller increase in the R^2 value is noted when the unweighted scale is used. This does not suggest that the other variables are unimportant, but in terms of accounting for difference in socialization they account for relatively little of the variance over and above the political variables.

The data also suggest that anticipated benefits are important determinants of successful socialization. With one exception for all three benefit dimensions the beta weights for the anticipated benefits are larger than the beta weights for the current benefits. The only exception to this generalization is the beta weight of .28 for anticipated political benefits and a beta weight of .37 for current political benefits when employing the unweighted socialization scale. Admittedly, the difference in some cases was so small as to be non-existent such as the beta weight of .07 for anticipated economic benefits and .06 for current economic benefits when employing the unweighted scale. At least it can be said that anticipated benefits are no less important than current benefits, which raises a question concerning the generalization that lower class persons are less oriented toward deferred gratification. No direction was predicted in the relationship of income to socialization since income could be a reflection of ability to join a cooperative organization, but income could also operate as an inhibitor since persons with high incomes would not benefit as much from a low income cooperative. The beta weight of $-.19$, which is the third largest beta weight when using the weighted socialization scale and the $-.09$ when using the unweighted scale would suggest that high income restricts the benefits one can derive from this type of organization and thus does not provide a motivation to learn the

role. The relatively low beta weight of the remaining demographic variables of years of formal education, age, and membership tenure would suggest that role learning as measured in this study is something all persons could learn. The analysis of a relatively new organization implied that all members had a relatively short time to learn the role. While the direction of the beta weights for length of membership tenure and years of formal education are in the expected direction, the relative size of the beta weights would suggest that these variables contribute little to our understanding of socialization in voluntary organizations. This is consistent with Brim and Wheeler's suggestion that most adult roles are designed for the "average man."

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

We drew heavily from the work of Brim and Wheeler (1966) who employed the exchange model in explaining motivation for adult socialization. Variables to be examined were based on the Barnard-Simon Exchange Model (1958) which is concerned with the exchange between an individual and an organization. In this case, adult socialization was limited to learning the role of member as perceived by the leaders. This definition of member role was used because the current leaders were greatly involved in founding the organization which included defining the organization's means and goals and to some extent the participant obligation of members. Furthermore, as Etzioni (1961) points out, the organizational leaders have major responsibility for disseminating information and socializing the new members. The approach to studying role learning in the organization was that of examining the participant obligation consensus between the leaders and the rank and file members and to examine some of the

factors related to this consensus.

The results of this study suggest that perceived benefits, both current and anticipated, and the value the respondent attached to the particular type of benefit are related to adult socialization. The availability of the benefit from alternative organizations did not explain much variance in this study. For most members no alternative organization from which the benefit could be received existed in the area. As a consequence, perceived benefits and value orientation for which some differences were noted in the sample, could be expected to explain most of the variance in socialization.

Not all types of benefits were equally related to socialization, however. In this organization which listed as its major goals those of an economic nature and which was evaluated in terms of economic success (Marshall and Godwin, 1971) the noneconomic or political benefits were more highly related to socialization than were the economic benefits. This finding is consistent with the findings by Rogers et. al. (1972) that the noneconomic benefits were more highly associated with role performance than the economic benefits. Also consistent with the above mentioned study of role performance, anticipated benefits were generally more highly associated with role learning than were benefits currently received.

While the difference explained by the two socialization scales was not large, more variance is explained in the unweighted scale than in the weighted scale. This finding was contrary to our prediction that those participation items felt to be more important by the leaders would be stressed more by the leaders and, thus, there would be less dissensus between leaders and rank and file members (more socialization) for these participation items. This finding

raises questions such as: does the leadership not stress different participation items feeling that all forms of involvement are important, do member-peer relationships affect the socialization process or are the more important participation items as viewed by the leaders hard to communicate to members?

A research design such as that employed in this study is necessarily limited in its ability to establish causal linkages as suggested in the exchange model. Embarking from Homan's theory of distributive justice (Homan's 1961), an exchange theory, one can suggest that persons may develop anxieties if they feel that they receive more than the effort they expend. In this case members who are currently receiving benefits may feel that they "should" do more to justify the receiving of the benefits. Nevertheless, to the extent that what the member feels he should do is consistent with the role the leaders perceive for the member we assume that the leaders were successful in their socialization process.

In focusing on the socialization of members, Etzioni focuses on dynamic dimensions of participation or upon factors which the organizational leaders can manipulate to some extent. While the study suggests that certain static factors such as income and years of formal education are slightly related to socialization, those variables which are of a dynamic nature such as benefits received are much more highly related to role learning than were the static factors. In addition, value orientation, which probably occupies a position on a continuum between static and dynamic factors, may also be manipulated over a period of time if the adult socialization process is expanded to include the cognitive orientation spheres.

The current study in focusing on role learning has examined the successful transmission of what the role of member involves. This implicitly involved an examination of the success of the communication process between organizational leaders and members. If we can assume that the successful learning of the role of member has been achieved, the next step in understanding participation is that of examining the consistency between what the member thinks he should do as a member and his actual behavior. By their methodological procedure the studies by Rogers (1971), Warner and Rogers (1971), and Rogers et. al. (1972) have already taken steps in this direction.

Table 1: Beta weights and multiple correlations between the Unweighted Socialization Scale and fifteen independent variables.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	BETA	R [*]	R ² [*]
Current Political Benefits	.37		
Anticipated Political Benefits	.28		
Political Value Index	.18	<u>.82</u>	<u>.67</u>
Political Benefits from alternative organizations	.03		
Current Coop Benefits	-.11		
Anticipated Coop Benefits	.16		
Coop Benefits from alternative organizations	-.02		
(General) Economic Value Index	.10		
Current Economic Benefits	.06		
Anticipated Economic Benefits	.07		
Economic Benefits from alternative organizations	-.05	<u>.84</u>	<u>.72</u>
Income	-.09		
Length of Membership Tenure	.05		
Years of Education	.09		
Age	.05	<u>.85</u>	<u>.73</u>

* Each of these figures utilizes all independent variables above it

Table 2: Beta weights and multiple correlations between the Weighted Socialization Scale and fifteen independent variables.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	BETA	R [*]	R ^{2*}
Current Political Benefits	.31		
Anticipated Political Benefits	.29		
Political Value Index	.16	<u>.75</u>	<u>.57</u>
Political Benefits from alternative organizations	.07		
Current Coop Benefits	-.09		
Anticipated Coop Benefits	.10		
Coop Benefits from alternative organizations	.02		
(General) Economic Value Index	.14		
Current Economic Benefits	.03		
Anticipated Economic Benefits	.09		
Economic Benefits from alternative organizations	.04	<u>.79</u>	<u>.63</u>
Income	-.19		
Length of Membership Tenure	.11		
Years of Education	.09		
Age	-.04	<u>.82</u>	<u>.67</u>

* Each of these figures utilizes all independent variables above it

Anticipated Benefits Factor Analysis With Orthogonal Rotation

Factor I (political benefits)

<u>items</u>	<u>factor loading</u>
Get a chance for leadership training; get new information and educational opportunities	.89
Bring poor people together to share their problems	.84
A chance for Black people to learn to trust each other	.81
Have an influence on things in your community	.78
A chance for Black people to save their money together	.77
Get a chance to meet new people	.75
Help poor people on welfare	.69
Place pressure on the White power structure	.63
Build a Black political organization	.52
Get more opportunities for Black folks	.50

Factor II (coop benefits)

Build a Black coop bank in Lafayette	.85
Get coop loans to build homes for Black Folks	.74
Build a coop owned supermarket	.66
Get federal programs like Head Start	.39

Factor III (economic benefits)

Receive dividends on shares	.77
Get more jobs for Black Folks	.77
Get low interest rates on loans and financial counseling	.74
Get low rates on Blue Cross Insurance	.58
Help make things better for our children	.52

Current Benefits Factor Analysis With Orthogonal Rotation

Factor I (political benefits)	
<u>items</u>	<u>factor loading</u>
Get a chance for leadership training; get new information and educational opportunities	.85
A chance for Black people to learn to trust each other	.81
Get a chance to meet new people	.79
Bring poor people together to share their problems	.79
Have an influence on things in your community	.75
A chance for Black people to save their money together	.73
Get more opportunities for Black folks	.68
Help make things better for our children	.67
Place pressure on the White power structure	.63
Build a Black political organization	.61
Factor II (coop benefits)	
Build a Black coop bank in Lafayette	.74
Bring in federal programs like Head Start	.73
Get coop loans to build homes for Black folks	.69
Build a coop owned supermarket	.63
Help poor folks on welfare	.56
Pay dividends on shares	.50
Factor III (economic benefits)	
Get low rates on loans and financial counseling	.82
Get low rates on Blue Cross Insurance	.75
Get more jobs for Black folks	.59

FOOTNOTES

2. A more recent study by Mulford et. al. (1972) does not provide strong support for the proposition predicting a relationship between socialization and recruitment, but a correlation of .40 between socialization and role performance was found.
3. The benefit item which did not load on any of the three factors and was omitted was: "provides funds to send our children to college."
4. A correlation of .91 was found between the weighted and unweighted socialization scale.
5. To join the cooperative a person must pay five dollars to the education fund and pledge an additional \$300, usually to be paid at the rate of one dollar per month.

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